

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A system for managing a change to an item associated with a complex system of inter-related items comprising:

a computer-based database comprising a plurality of records, wherein each record corresponds to and includes information concerning an item associated with the complex system, said information including an identification of records of related ~~other~~ items that could be affected by a change to the changed item, wherein the computer-based database is configured, upon input of an item to be changed, to identify from the information in the record of the input item related items that could be affected by the change to the item and determine for each related item by predetermined rules whether (1) the related item will be an affected item, (2) the related item will be a non-affected item, or (3) additional analysis is required to determine whether or not the related item will be an affected item or a non-affected item; and

a computer-user interface displaying a list of the related items that could be affected by the change to the item and further displaying (1) a user-updateable list of the affected items and (2) a user-updateable list of the non-affected items and (3) a user-updateable list of the related items that require additional analysis before said items can be assigned to either said affected items list or said non-affected items list.

2. – 3. (canceled)

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4. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein said items include parts used in an assembled end product and documents associated with said assembled end product.

5. (currently amended) The system of claim 1, wherein said computer-user interface further includes a user-updateable input field for receiving an identifier of said item to be changed; ~~and a list of related items that could be affected by a change made to said item to be changed.~~

6. (original) The system of claim 5, wherein said list of related items is generated automatically in response to a query to said database based upon said identifier of said changed item in said input field.

7. (original) The system of claim 5, wherein said computer-user interface further includes one or more visual indicators associated with said items on said related items list that indicate if said related items are assigned to said list of affected items, said list of items that require additional analysis, or ~~and~~ said list of non-affected items.

8. (canceled)

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9. (original) The system of claim 1, further including an “undo” function that allows a human user of the system to retract a previous assignment of an item to either said list of affected items or said list of non-affected items.

10. (original) The system of claim 9, wherein said “undo” function includes automatic reversing of any assignments of items made to said list of affected items or said list of non-affected items that were influenced by the assignment of said retracted item.

11. (currently amended) A method of managing changes to items associated with a complex system of inter-related items comprising:

searching a database for related items that could be affected by a change related to a changed item;

assigning each of said related items to one of (i) an affected items list, (ii) a non-affected items list, and (iii) an analysis required list, depending upon whether each of the related items (i) is affected by a change to said changed item, (ii) is not affected by a change to said changed item, and (iii) requires additional analysis to determine if the related item is affected or not affected; and

displaying on a computer-user interface a list of the identified items that could be affected by the change to the item and further displaying (1) a user-updateable list of the identified affected items and (2) a user-updateable list of the identified non-affected items and (3) a user-updateable list of items that

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require additional analysis before said items can be assigned to either said affected items list or said non-affected items list.

~~wherein said affected items list, said non-affected items list, and said analysis required list, are incorporated into a computer user interface.~~

12. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein a human user manually assigns at least some of said related items to said affected items list, said non-affected items list, and said analysis required list; and wherein at least some of said related items are automatically assigned to said affected items list, said non-affected items list, and said analysis required list by pre-established rules applied by computer software.

13. (currently amended) The method of claim 11, further including the step steps:

~~generating a list of related items on said computer user interface in response to said database search; and~~

providing a visual indication associated with each of said related items that indicates if said related item has been assigned to said affected list, said non-affected list, and said analysis required list.

14. (original) The method of claim 11, further including the steps:

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analyzing items assigned to said analysis required list to determine if said analysis required items would be affected by a change to said changed item; and

assigning said analysis required items to said affected items list and said non-affected items list, depending upon whether or not said analysis required items would be affected by a change to said changed item.

15. (original) The method of claim 14, wherein said step of assigning said analysis required items is performed manually by a human user.

16. (original) The method of claim 14, wherein one or more of said searching, said analyzing, and said assigning steps are repeated until no items remain on said analysis required list.

17. – 21. (canceled)

22. (new) The system of claim 1 wherein the computer-user interface provides for user selection between a plurality of predetermined, unique relationships linking the related items and the display indicates the selection in association with the list of related items.

23. (new) The method of claim 14, wherein said steps are performed at least once with the searching step searching for related items as defined in a first predetermined relationship and at least once with the searching step searching for related items as defined in a second predetermined relationship.